



September 29, 2023  
Feast of the Archangels

Dear Friend of Angelus Academy,

Nurturing a lifelong love of and devotion to the Holy Eucharist has always begun with our youngest students and continues in earnest long after their First Communion. This is critical—not only for our students, but for the Church, as many Catholics today do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

In our Atrium, our Little Messengers (three- and four-year-old students) through second graders begin to develop a personal relationship with Jesus the Good Shepherd, learn of His great sacrifice, and become familiar with the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Weekly school Mass in our Chapel of the Holy Angels gives students the opportunity to see the Holy Sacrifice more closely. Our monthly Eucharistic Adoration allows students to spend time with the “Hidden Jesus” in both silent and spoken prayer. Indeed, our kindergarteners provide beautiful examples of talking lovingly with Jesus during their time in Adoration!

In our ardent efforts to teach our students to know and always seek the true, the good, and the beautiful, it is vital that we help support school families in keeping Jesus and the Holy Eucharist at the center of their lives. When our students’ school day remains anchored in the Blessed Sacrament through catechesis, history, literature, Mass, and Adoration, our students will more surely and firmly stay rooted in the Truth.

**As an independent Catholic school, we receive no financial support from the Diocese of Arlington.** We are entirely dependent upon tuition—which only partially covers the cost of educating each student—and donations from our generous benefactors like you in order to meet our operating expenses and to keep our tuition more affordable for school families.

Please join us as a *messenger of hope* and **help us raise \$90,000 for our school**. Your tax-deductible gift will help ensure that the next generation knows what truly matters: the sanctity of life, moral courage, loyalty to family and the Church, love of country, and sacrificial compassion for those who suffer. *Together let us help form the next generation of Catholics who believe in and are dedicated to the Holy Eucharist.*

May the Lord and His Archangels bless you for your prayers and generous gifts to Angelus Academy! Saint Michael the Archangel, Guardian of the Blessed Sacrament, pray for us and defend us in battle.

Gratefully,

Raymond St. Pierre, M.Ed.  
Head of School

**My husband, Steve, and I are convinced that it was our Blessed Mother and the angels, with one final nudge from Saints Philip and Nathanael, who ultimately led us to the doorsteps of Angelus Academy in November 2021.**

We had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of rigor in the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Seasoned teachers from the “old way” were retiring or being pushed out by more progressive school administrators. Our family had continued to grow, so we still had little ones who were starting to experience the change in teaching philosophies.

All the while, I had been experiencing a deep reversion to my Catholic faith, and Steve had converted. He was confirmed and our marriage was convalidated during the same Mass in 2019. **It was years in the making, but we now wanted to go another step further and embrace Catholic education as part of our family culture.** Early on, we had felt like FCPS needed our children to be the light in the darkness, but as the ideologies got further from truth, we desired more support.

We spoke to a priest-friend about our decision to make the leap to Catholic school. Where should we go? He replied, “Angelus Academy.” I had heard of Angelus and understood it to be “tiny” and “very Catholic.” For years, I can honestly say that neither Steve nor I felt “spiritually ready” for such a school. We just couldn’t “hang” with “those kinds of Catholics.” This priest never let up. He would hear us complain about FCPS and then simply respond with, “Angelus Academy!”



When FCPS decided to remain closed for the fall of 2020, we went against our priest-friend’s recommendation and enrolled our children in a different Catholic school. We thought that a larger school would be beneficial. It was anything but that. The school community seemed gripped by fear and lacking in their trust in God as they implemented COVID-related protocols.

We returned for a second school year in the hopes that lifted COVID restrictions would improve the experience. It did not.

**During prayer before the Blessed Sacrament one day,** however, the

Lord brought many disjointed pieces of information together for me. I recalled a slide from the Back-to-School Night presentation boasting a social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum being used at the school. I realized that this was the exact same SEL program used by Loudoun County Public Schools. I asked the Lord what to do next. He told me to read about the program.

I subsequently discovered that funding for this SEL program came from nefarious groups that promote ideologies strictly against the teachings of the Church, such as transgender ideology and abortion. Surely, the school simply did not know what they had gotten themselves into by using this program. Unfortunately, a meeting with the administration a month later yielded no change. Steve and I both agreed that we needed to find a new school for our children immediately.

Steve and I also felt like we had discovered an evil dragon but could only see its toenail. The beast was too big for us to battle on our own. We were further down the road of

knowledge than most. Rather than continuing to fight for other families unaware of all that I had discovered, we first needed to care for and protect our own family. I was frantic. My children's innocence was at stake. I then remembered our priest-friend's repeated advice: "Angelus Academy!"

Mrs. Sheila Bruen answered my frantic phone call the next day. She assured me that none of that same "funny business" goes on at the school, it's a very low-tech environment where books are everywhere, and kids play for hours in an imaginary playground called the parking lot. She told me that **this was a place where "children stay children" longer because the school protects their innocence.** I cried my way through our conversation. She then invited me to come for a visit.

I arrived at the school as it was opening for the day to meet with Mrs. BettyJo Lash and have a tour. I was nervous to go inside. The school is in an industrial park, for Heaven's sake, and there is no campus to speak of. What was I doing?! As I was walking up the side of the building, I heard Saints Philip and Nathanael. St. Nathanael joked to me, "Can *anything* good come from Nazareth?!" St. Philip seemed to be on my other side; he smiled and said, "Come and see."

I then walked into the school lobby and immediately felt the Holy Spirit's presence.

There was peace and sunlight. It smelled like a school. Children were happy. They greeted me cheerfully as I waited in the lobby. They were physically close to each other. Their friendship was evident. I sensed more love than fear. **This was exactly the kind of school I wanted for my children!**

I finally had to admit that through prayer, study, and consecration to Mary, I had become one of "those kinds of Catholics" and *wanted* to "hang" with the likes of them. This is a school where faith and reason are intertwined beautifully in every decision made, no matter how big or small. Mother Mary protects our children and the mission. Angelus is helping Steve and me to raise saints (rascally ones, though they may be). Steve and I always tell our children that our rally point is Heaven. The faculty, staff, and families are all working toward that goal...Heaven!

**This is only the beginning of my family's story at Angelus Academy.** How Steve came to be the second-grade teacher is one for another time. It's steeped in Eucharistic miracles, spiritual attack, suffering, redemption .... all of that. God has a plan for all of us, and sometimes, He gives us the grace to see how it all fits together—and how it was years in the making.

*~ Dr. Margaret Fisher*  
School parent and wife of our  
second-grade teacher, Dr. Steve Fisher



**Messengers of Hope Campaign**

*St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle!*

**September 29<sup>nd</sup> - November 1<sup>st</sup>**

Feast of the Archangels to the Solemnity of All Saints

**Will you help us  
reach our goal  
of \$90,000?**

**DONATE ONLINE**  
[AngelusAcademy.org](https://AngelusAcademy.org)



The most special thing about the Eucharist is that we can receive Jesus.  
The fact that we can receive Him at Mass is the great thing our lives need.  
It gives us the grace of God to help us on Earth.

~ *Kacper*, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

It is really cool and special to go to Adoration because you get to talk to Jesus in silence, and you get to be so close to Him.

~ *Emma*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

The Eucharist means everything to me! It makes me feel peaceful and calm. It also makes me feel ready to tackle a hard task or a hard person. And it makes me feel dreamy and happy, like God is hugging me. I wish I could feel like that forever! God is so good!

~ *Estelle*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

The Eucharist is Jesus. The Eucharist is not just bread. It is Jesus. It makes me want to pray. Jesus is God. There is only one true God. I like to pray to Jesus. I love God with my heart and my soul and my strength.

~ *Anna*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

When you receive the Eucharist, you are receiving Jesus' body, blood, soul, and divinity. When we consume the Eucharist, we can think about how Jesus died for us and at the Last Supper when He said, "This is my body." We can also think about how God sent His only son to save us from our sins, so we are receiving our Savior.

~ *Jackson*, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

It is special to visit the Hidden Jesus in school because it sets aside time where we can go to pray undisturbed.

~ *James*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

I've been practicing a lot [to receive my First Holy Communion].

~ *Sarah*, 1<sup>st</sup> grade

The Eucharist is Jesus—body, blood, soul, and divinity—and I will believe in Jesus no matter what!

~ *Michael*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade

What is special about visiting Jesus in Adoration at school is that we are visiting Jesus, the Son of God. We have a special chance to talk to Jesus. We can tell Him anything. We can ask Him to forgive or to help a person. You can talk to Jesus if you are lonely.

~ *Siona*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

The Eucharist is special because it is truly Jesus we are receiving at Mass.

The Mass is a celebration of His sacrifice on the cross. Just like at the Last Supper, the priest says the words Jesus did, transforming the bread and wine into His body and blood. Then we receive Him like the Apostles did all those years ago. Adoration is special because Jesus is right there, in the room, with us.

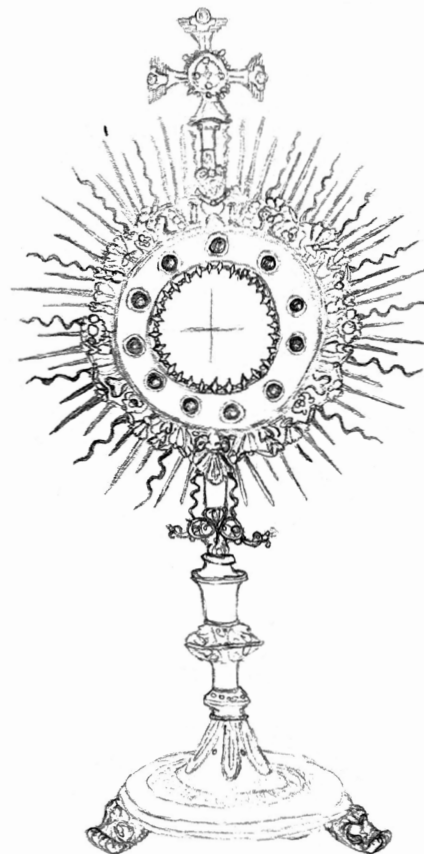
~ *Dominic*, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

The special thing about Adoration is that you get to have alone time with Jesus and get to pray for things.

~ *Caleb*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

The special thing about the Holy Eucharist is to be in the presence of the One True God. The special thing about receiving Communion at Mass is knowing that Jesus gave His life for us.

~ *Sebastian*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade



*Paul Russo* 7<sup>th</sup> grade